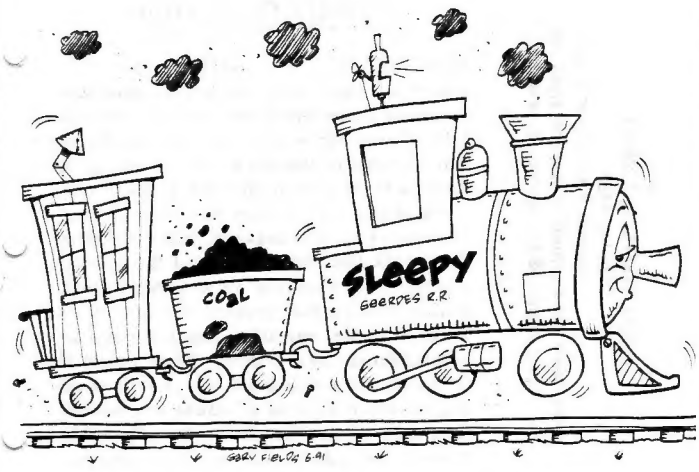


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A further note on copyright. Public domain is forever. This means once a publication or piece of artwork is in the public domain due to expiration of copyright, anyone can print it at any time. It is never eligible for copyright protection again. This is why you see different companies coming out with Krazy Kat stuff or editions of the works of Charles Dickens. I've been reading a lot of legal stuff on copyrights lately, but what a lot of these lawyer/writers fail to tell you is that they do not take copyright cases on contingincy. You have to front some money and pay all the bills along the way. If you win, you may get the money back plus some extra, but you take the gamble. You also have to travel a lot. Most of those likely to rip you off live in New York or Los Angeles of Chicago [I've been ripped off by people in all of these cities over the years.] and you have to go where they are to sue them. Basically, suing is a luxury and you can indulge if you have a lawyer on staff [or a few dozen of them like Disney or IBM]. If you're just a working cartoonist, the law isn't going to do much for you whether you file copyright papers or not.

## HACKER ETHIC

The bottom line of programming was ineluctably tied to the bottom line on a publisher's ledger sheet. Elegance, innovation, and coding pyrotechnics were much admired, but a new criterion for hacker stardom had crept into the equation: awesome sales figures. Early hackers might have regarded this as heresy: all software--all information--should be free, they'd argue, and pride should be invested in how many people *use* your program and how much they are impressed with it. But the Third Generation hackers never had the sense of community of their predecessors, and early on they came to see healthy sales figures as essential to becoming winners.

--Steven Levy, **HACKERS**, 1984.

**Young people try to live the correct life, to have the correct image. How do they know? TV tells them so. It shows them what to wear and drive, what attitude to manifest, but what if TV is lying to them--what if they are leading incorrect lives behind false images? What if they are nothing more than the products they consume?**

**Lewis Lapham**
**Harper's, May, 1991.**

**In the postmodern world maybe war will come to be understood as a performing art, made for televison and promoted as spectacle. Maybe, as the producers of the charades on MTV would have it, Madonna is Marilyn Monroe, true love is a perfume bottle, and George Bush is Winston Churchill.**

**EL VIBORA 135 is $9 pp from J. M. Berenguer, Plaza Beatas, 3, Barcelona, Spain. Adult sex material.**

R. K. Sloane's **PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL ARTIST** will be showing at La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles from July 5-23, 1991.

I read Jay Kennedy's letter in the latest **City Limits Gazette** and thought I would respond in my newsletter since I might have too much to say for Steve to print. Of course, Jay's listing of books and zines will be *subjective and arbitrary.* All listings are. But when he starts talking about what he is going to include and exclude from the new edition of his price guide and me and all the guys who published newaves with me over the years are automatically excluded, that requires comment. Jay is asking whether or not someone is underground or alternative enough to be include in his guide and I have to shake my head at this line of thought. To be self-published is to be unique, to be one of those who refuses to allow someone else's taste to dictate what should or should not be written or drawn, hence to be outside the work-for-hire world where one's work belongs to the company and fits the company image.

Jay is going to list Gary Arlington's 7-centers, presumably because many of them were drawn by artists who later made their mark in underground comix, yet he is not going to list the Comix World Mini-series where Kevin Eastman and others did their apprentice work!

If it is impossible to list everything, Jay, then why list anything at all? Why update the Guide? If the Comic Buyer's Guide is doing such a good listing job, why duplicate it? if the motivation for doing the guide is collector interest, one might ask if there was ever enough interest in ugs and bw's and alternatives to justify a guide. I know it didn't sell. My own original guide to newave comix didn't sell. I never cared about that anymore than most of the guys who worked with me. We were having a good time, just hobbyists most of us--we never thought of newave as a business.

I know there were small groups of guys in high schools all over the country who thought of the minis or newaves as a business, but that's their fantasy and they have a right to it. Some continued to do comics long after they graduated and I suspect they had a good time with it all, keeping in touch with friends. I always enjoyed the cameraderie of newave. When I got a piece of art in the mail, it made me laugh and I ran it off and got some copies in the mail right away. For about three years we had an energetic core group and some of those guys went on to make a living out of art, but most remained regular hobbyists, drawing when they felt the urge, raising their families, getting older and wiser, sharing some of what they did with their kids.

Look at it this way, a price guide is a commercial publication, more about money than art. Those who are included get a little ego boost if they are mentioned in the right light and those who are excluded are made to feel unworthy when they are just as worthy as those arbitrarily listed.

Jay talks about the original underground comix coming from the artist's inspiration. They weren't "formula-ridden genre pieces." Ah, but many of them are now quite formula ridden. Anyone seen a copy of Crumb's **ID**? A **CHERRY POPTART**? So do you list these, Jay, just because they were drawn by Crumb and Welz? You don't have to draw muscle bound guys in their underwear to become formula ridden. You can draw caricatures of yourself torturing women when you're in your mid-forties and be pretty up to your epiglottis in formula.

Whether you can avoid formula and make a living in the cartoon world is a good question for debate. Watterson is taking a year off because he has become trapped in formula. You can't spin very far off Winnie the Pooh and Peanuts, not within the mundane limitations of the American comic strip. The biggest success of this decade thus far is total formula. Hey, yesterday's Batman is today's Ninja Turtle

There was a lot of really nice artwork in the newave comix, but the majority of the comics community rejected the form and were therefore unable to see the content. Kennedy is arbitrarily setting up the same parameters in his price guide. You list what everyone already knows about and ignore the new and unique. Hey, you want to read about the truly unusual pubs of our time, you read Mike Gunderoy's **FACTSHEET FIVE**. There's a guy who lists *everything* or tries. --C.G

Clark Dissmeyer's **PROPAGANDA WAR** is up to #5. Send him a stamp and get one. Box 1531, Kearney, NE 68848.

From Rip Off Press comes the second issue of Annie Sprinkle's **THE ADVENTURES OF MISS TIMED.** $2.50 at your local store.

Graham Johnstone and Kevin Hobbs have published the first issue of **DEAD TREES**. There are six projected issues. Information either of the artists c/o 125 Downahill Street, Glasgow G12 9DN. I don't have a US price on this magazine.

**Scientists are actually preoccupied with accomplishment. So they are focused on whether they can do something. They never stop to ask if they *should* do something. They conveniently define such considerations as pointless. If they don't do it, someone else will. Discovery, they believe, is inevitable. So they just try to do it first. That's the game in science. Even pure scientific discovery is an aggressive, penetrative act. It takes big equipment, and it literally changes the world afterward. Particle accelerators scar the land, and leave radioactive byproducts. Astronauts leave trash on the moon. There is always some proof that scientists were there, making their discoveries. Discovery is always a rape of the natural world. Always.**

**Michael Crichton**
**JURASSIC PARK, 1990.**

## BY CLAY GEERDES

**THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE.** A children's story to be read to kids with trains on the brain.

**$2.50 pp.**

**ESSAYS: VOLUME ONE.** A group of essays about my early life for those readers who have always wondered who the hell Clay Geerdes is and what he is really like.

**$3.50 pp.**

**ESSAYS: VOLUME TWO.** More general essays, a couple of which have appeared in **COMIX WAVE** or elsewhere.

**$3.50 pp.**

A 29¢ stamp will get you a free sample of **BABY SUE**. P. O. Box 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

## WERTHAM REVISITED

I've been following the '60's/UG comix discussion with interest, but I think your comment on opposing comics to heighten interest (CW 104) is offbase. Wertham didn't popularize horror comics by opposing them, but he did help stifle an industry that was on the verge of really getting good. The horror comics were probably on their way out anyway, but the resultant furor wrecked sales for all comics.

Wertham stumbled on comics by accident. He was an expert on child violence, remember, meaning violence perpetrated by *children*. His book, **Show of Violence**, is all about child killers. The irony of publishing such a work at the height of World War II was steamrollered by Wertham's nonamused Freudian article. Possible it was Gershon Legman, a superb crank and pre-**Factsheet Five** self-publisher, that steered Dr. Fred onto comics. Legman was convinced that violence was sublimated sex but Wertham was more interested in offering succor to socio-neurosis than in determining its cause. During the post-war period adults tended to project their fears and insecurities on children. Russia beats the US at the Olympics and the President orders physical fitness standards to be raised in the schools. Sputnik is launched, Vanguard blows up on the launch pad, and Americans are convinced that it's the fault of children who don't learn enough science at school. Remember **Why Johnny Can't Read--and Ivan Can! The Little Red Schoolhouse** and other fear pubs of the era? So, too, did adults visit their own violence on children. It's no accident the child violence scare accompanied war. In 1953, Wertham offered an escape for adults disturbed by violence" they could end violence in children, and, psychically, rid themselves of guilt. War babies were voodoo dolls for their parents.

When Fred discovered horror/crime comics he touched a nexus where juvenile delinquency, bourgeois insecurity, and other neural paths of the group psyche met. It was a concatenation of opportunity that he never found again, though he touched it once more, in the mid-seventies, when television violence was cited as a causative factor in a Florida child murder. Wertham was cited as an expert in news magazines covering the case. But child violence was no longer such a useful whipping boy (sorry). The battered-child syndrome had been discovered a decade before and the sex-abuse flap was about to get going. It was ludicrous to see children as perpetrators of the violence they were obviously receiving. Then, too, having grown up as constant recipients of parental projection, war babies had become used to being targets; self-abuse and the elevation of the victim role are the order of the day so parents, not children, are now the perceived criminals.

Between the height of Wertham's fame and his brief appearance in the seventies, he published **A Sign For Cain**, another work which promoted the idea that if all depiction/description of violence was eliminated from society, then violence itself would disappear. "**Crime and Punishment** would have been a better book if Dostoyevsky had left out the murder," he said. This sort of notion permeates most rationales for censorship but few have taken it to Freddie's extremes. The man had the narrow-minded conviction of a Torquemada.

Well, we don't have Fred to kick around any more but the point of all this is: in 1969, Clay Geerdes could not have aided UG comix by attacking them. Wertham's crusade was big news because of the coincidence of historic vectors. Ripeness is all.

-Mike Culpepper

(I was being hypothetical, Mike, making the assumption that things grow when there is a reaction against them and die when basically ignored. Look what happened to **2 Live Crew**, for example, when there was a strong reaction against them in Florida. Before the reaction, they were just one of hundreds of rap groups. Afterward, it was hard to find a copy of **As Nasty as They Wanna Be** anywhere. Now there *has* been a strong negative reaction to many different underground comix and there are trials in progress around the country but very little attention is given to them in the mainstream press and I've yet to see a cartoonist, over or underground, on any of the major talk shows (and please do not tell me about Harvey Pekar trading insults with Letterman, because Pekar is not a cartoonist and those late night shows are stand up comedy and ad plugs, not serious discussion like **Donahue**).

While Wertham's book did not appear until 1953, he was actively crusading on the PTA circuit by 1947 while EC was still publishing **Picture Stories From The Bible.** It's my feeling that McCarthyism had as much if not more to do with the suppression of the comics in the early fifties than Wertham's ideas. A good discussion of the entire subject is included in Martin Barker's **A HAUNT OF FEARS** (Pluto Press, 1984). See also **THE MAD WORLD OF WILLIAM M. GAINES**.

**Don't trust your senses. Juxtapositions frequently lead to false conclusions. Fast food and sugar drinks make you fat, not slim and beautiful. Models never eat the products they promote. Movie and tv fantasies are never true. Just because you heard it on tv doesn't mean it really happened. Reckless drivers kill other people and themselves. The most dangerous and destructive drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, are legal.**

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada arrived in New York City in 1965 carrying seven dollars in rupees, the phone number of the son of a friend, and a few battered cooking utensils. When Prabhupada died in Vrindaban, India, in 1977, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness [ISKCON], the movement he started in a New York storefront, had over 200 temples and farms in sixty countries, ten of thousands of followers, and tens of millions of dollars. In the United States alone, ISKCON had fifty-seven temples and farms, more than five thousand devotees, and thousands of uninitiated believers.

**Reason and ridicule can get rid of faith: but the guilt and fear of punishment associated with free thinking remain.**
**--Fay Weldon**
**DARCY'S UTOPIA,1990**

**That's what gay couples do when they go into a men's room together. They take a shopping bag along. One stands in the bag, and all you see below the partition is a man with a shopping bag.**
**--Andy Warhol**

**It is both sobering and painful to realize, after twenty-five years of undercover work . . . that my career was meaningless and had had absolutely no effect whatsoever in the so-called war on drugs. The war itself is a fraud.**
**--Michael Levine**
**DEEP COVER, 1990.**

**In cartooning as in acting or architecture, the question is not so much *can* you do it, but will you get the *opportunity* to do it.**

**By the time most people decide what they want to spend their life doing, they've already spent most of it doing something else.**

## COMIX PLUGOLA

**Wars lay waste a generation, they say: fear of war has wasted one of ours. And how we made them feel it, our young, with our talk of nuclear winter and Armageddon! The revenge of the old upon the young, to deprive them thus of all hope of the future. Look at them now; how they appall you! Hollow-eyed, white-faced, black-clothed, they walk like zombies round the streets, puffing in or shooting up the dreary stuff, which makes the present real, enables them to smile, and lift a languid hand in salutation to their friends. They vomit if they can, they sick it all up: and if their digestions in spite of all abuse stay sound, they drop their litter instead: walk ankle deep in discarded Coke cans, beer tins, fast food packs, dust and rubbish of every kind, not to mention the excreta of rats and dogs, and they don't care one bit. It even seems to cheer them up a trifle, looking at all this, you are assailed by guilt and confusion, and you think, what's happened can only be this: that once there was a golden age, and everything ever since has been a falling away from that.**

**--Fay Weldon**
**DARCY'S UTOPIA, 1990**

**Get thee to a library and read therein.**
**Would'st be a breeder of illiterate clods?**

**Thirty thousand years ago, when men were doing cave paintings at Lescaux, they worked twenty hours a week to provide themselves with food and shelter and clothing. The rest of the time, they could play, or sleep, or do whatever they wanted. And they lived in a natural world, with clean air, clean water, beautiful trees and sunsets. Think about it. Twenty hours a week. Thirty thousand years ago.**

**Michael Crichton**
**JURASSIC PARK, 1990.**

**You know what's wrong with scientific power? It's a form of inherited wealth. And you know what assholes congenitally rich people are. It never fails.**

**Michael Crichton**
**JURASSIC PARK, 1990.**

**The quotations that run around my newsletter are from books I have read and I recommend them to those of you seeking to expand your consciousness. I like the work of Michael Crichton who takes contemporary scientific possibilities and projects them into the future. Crichton asked what if the astronauts were to bring an alien virus back to Earth and the result was THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN. In his latest noel, JURASSIC PARK, he takes on the biotech industry and speculates about what might happen if dinosaurs were cloned.**

**The major flaw in the domestic use of disinformation is that it results in a fragmented community which is easier to control in some ways and impossible to control or predict in others.**